



University  
of Dundee

# **COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SPSO 2016/2017**

Date approved:

Monitoring & Advisory Group on Appeals, Complaints & Discipline Procedures - 14 May 2018

Senate - 23 May 2018

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The University's Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) involves up to two stages for resolution of a complaint - Stage 1 (Frontline Resolution) to be handled within 5 working days and Stage 2 (Investigation) to be handled within 20 working days of receiving a complaint. Any person who remains dissatisfied following Stage 2 (Investigation) can take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for consideration. Our CHP can be found at: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/governance/dca/complaints/>

The University also provides quarterly statistical information on their website at: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/governance/dca/monitoringstatistics/>

This annual report has been approved by the University's Monitoring and Advisory Group on Appeals, Complaints and Discipline Procedures and also the Senatus Academicus. It contains key performance indicators for the period 1 August 2016 – 31 July 2017.

If you have any questions regarding this report, or any other complaint matter, please email the following address:

[complaintsresolution@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:complaintsresolution@dundee.ac.uk)

Alternatively, please contact Karen Stulka, Academic and Corporate Governance (Legal), [k.f.stulka@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:k.f.stulka@dundee.ac.uk) on (01382) 384011.

## 2. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

During 2016/17, the University received 38 complaints. Of these, 28 complaints were dealt with at stage 1 (frontline) and 10 complaints were dealt with at stage 2 (investigation). From the 10 complaints dealt with at stage 2, 2 complaints had been dealt with initially at stage 1. Charts 1 and 2 show the number and percentage of complaints handled each quarter at both frontline and investigation stages.

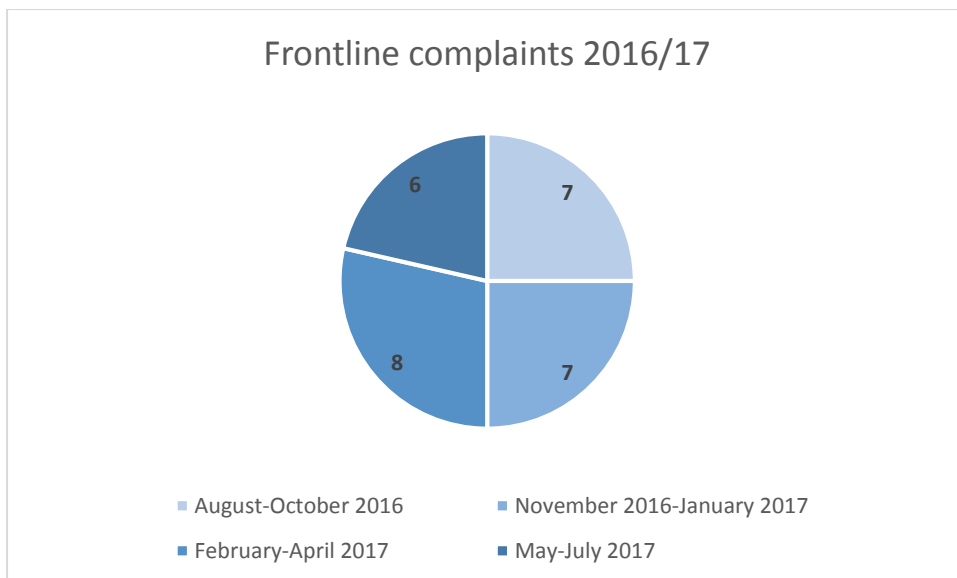


Chart 1 - Total number of stage 1 complaints received

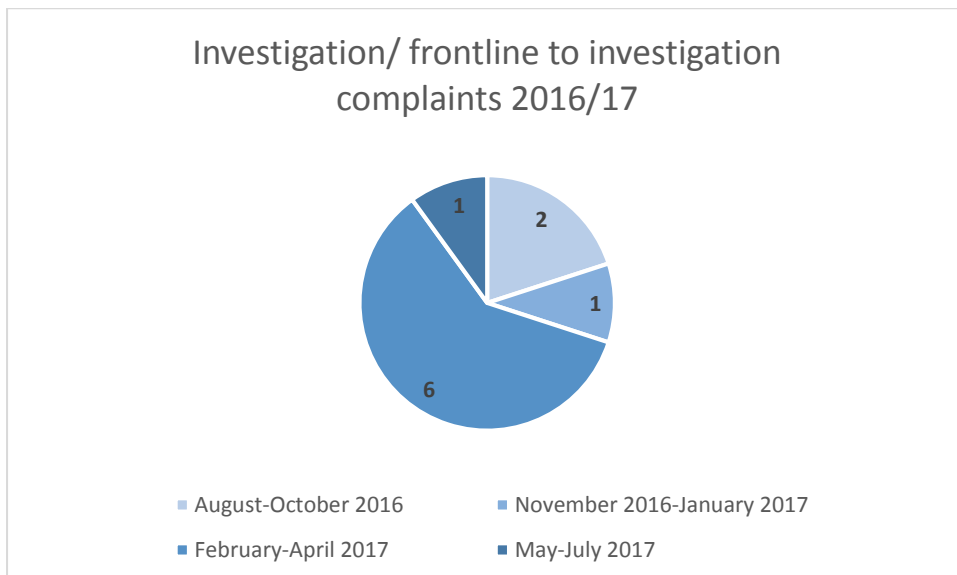


Chart 2 - Total number of stage 2 complaints received

The following table shows the number and percentage of complaints closed at frontline (within the 5 day timescale) and investigation (within the 20 day timescale).

Stage	Total complaints	Number closed within SPSO time limits	Percentage
Frontline (stage 1)	28	17	60.7% of stage 1 complaints
Investigation (stage 2)	10	2	20% of stage 2 complaints

### 3. AVERAGE TIME TAKEN TO RESOLVE A COMPLAINT

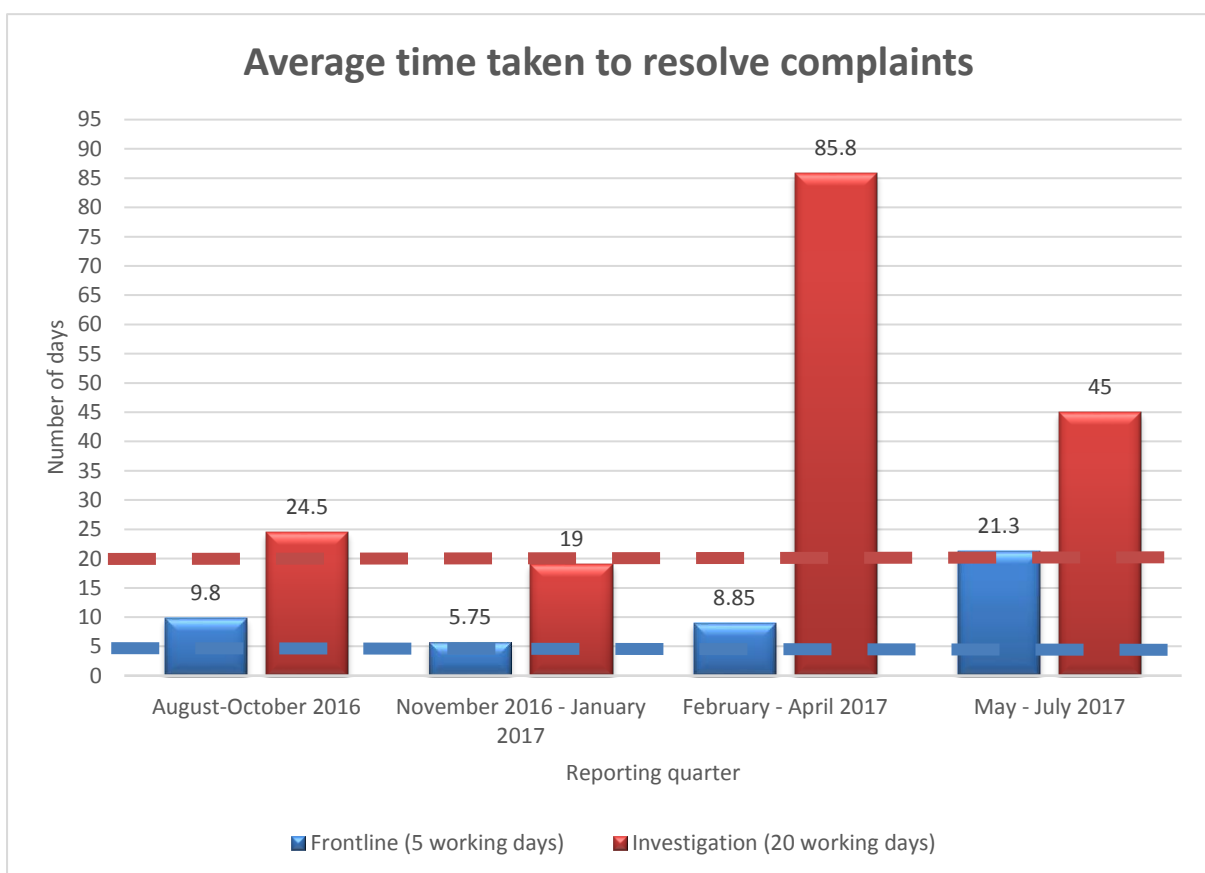


Chart 3 - Average time taken to resolve complaints

The reason for the unusually long average time for stage 2 complaints in February-April 2017 was due to the fact that one of the complainants became ill and had to return overseas. This delayed the complaint by over a year. Other longer average complaint periods were due to staff annual leave, complaints from overseas partners and a complainant on holiday who was therefore unable to meet or speak with the complaints handler within the timescale.

The following table shows the number and percentage of complaints where an extension to the frontline/investigation working day time limit had been authorised. In these cases, the complaints handler/investigator remained in contact with the complainant or arranged meetings with the complainant.

Stage	Number of complaints dealt with where an extension was authorised	Percentage
Frontline (stage 1)	6	21.4% of all stage 1 complaints
Investigation (stage 2)	4	40% of all stage 2 complaints

#### 4. NATURE OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Charts 4 and 5 show the nature of complaints received at each stage (including number and percentage). As can be seen, the largest number of complaints received are regarding staff/student conduct or service provision/student support.

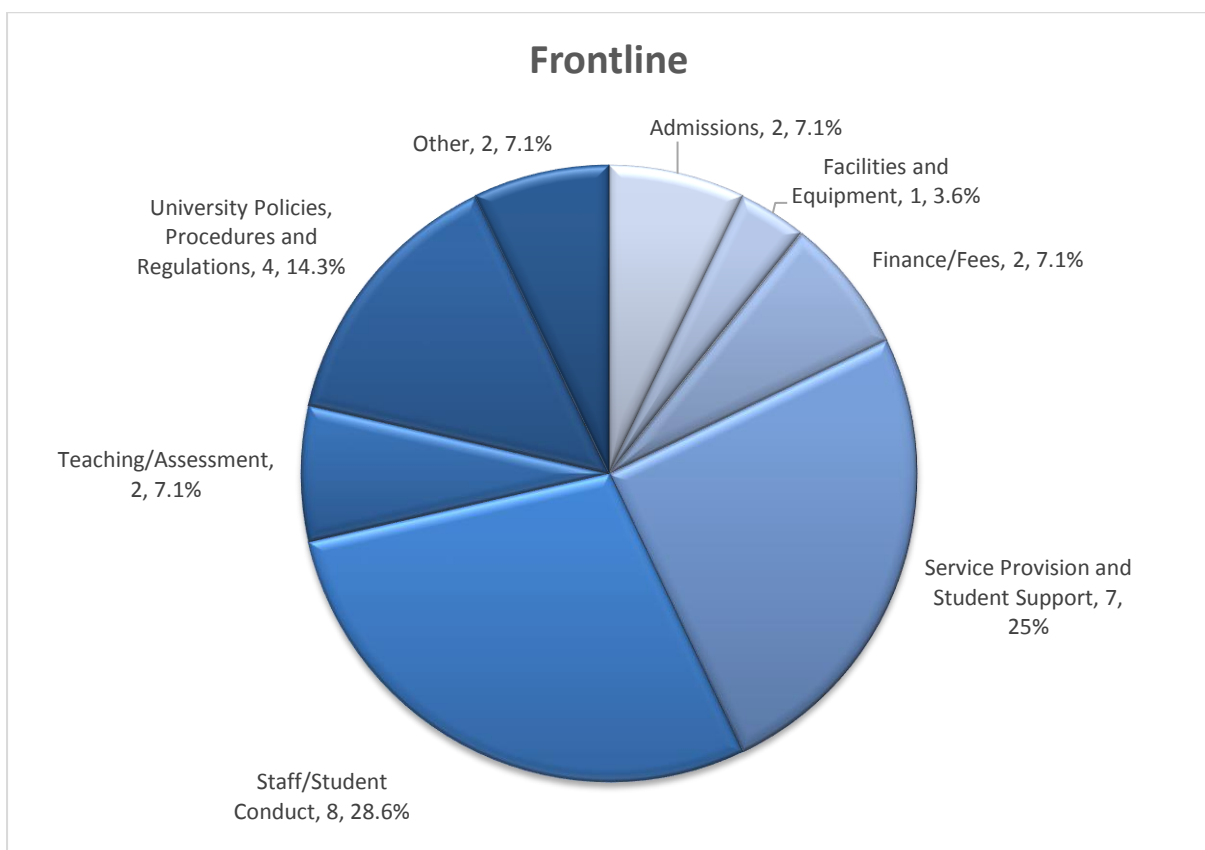


Chart 4 - Nature of complaints dealt with at stage 1

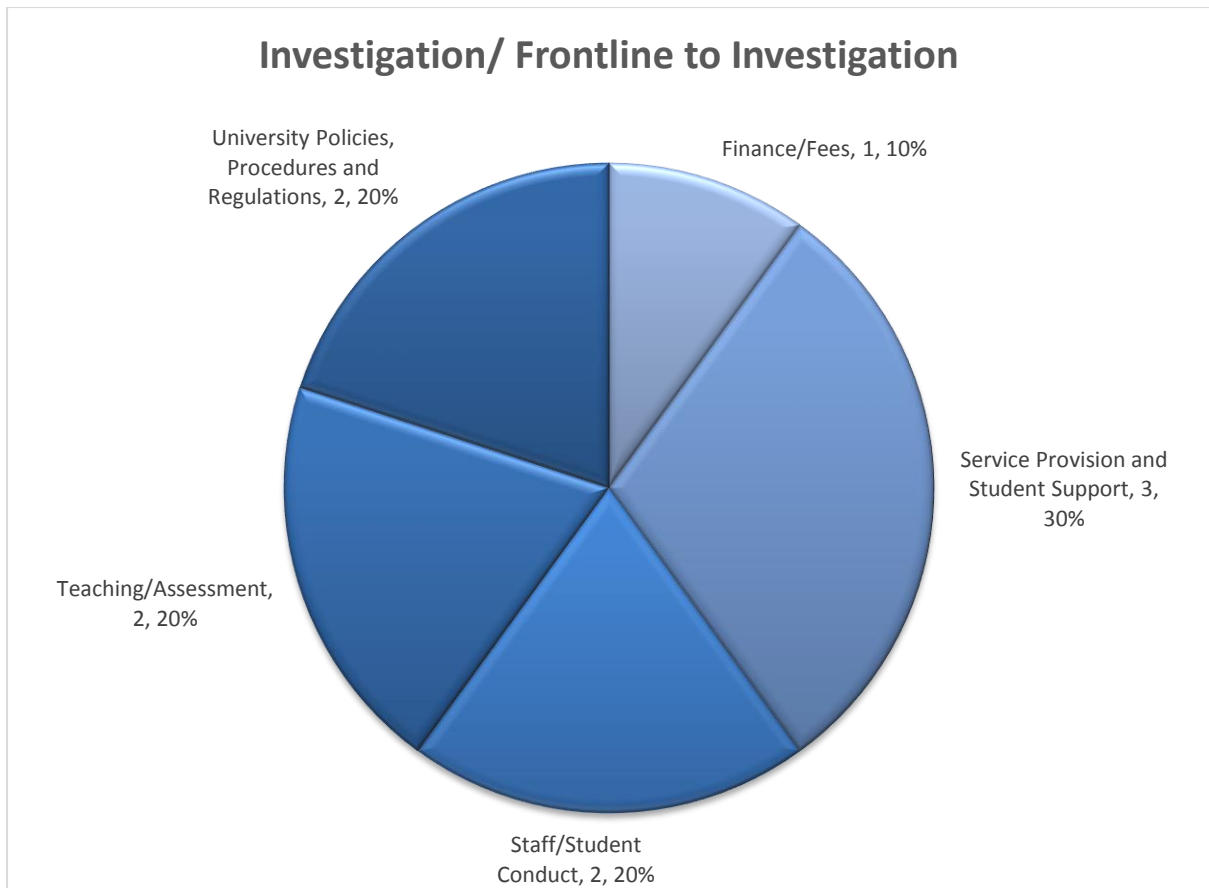


Chart 5 - Nature of complaints dealt with at stage 2

## 5. OUTCOME OF COMPLAINTS

Chart 6 shows the outcome of complaints at each stage. Only a small number of complaints were not upheld or the outcome accepted. Where the outcome of a stage 1 complaint was not accepted, the complaint was assigned to one of our trained complaints investigators to consider under stage 2.

As in previous years, a number of complainants did not report back to confirm that they accepted the outcome of their complaint.

At the current time, the complainants who remained dissatisfied after stage 2 have not taken their complaints to the SPSO.

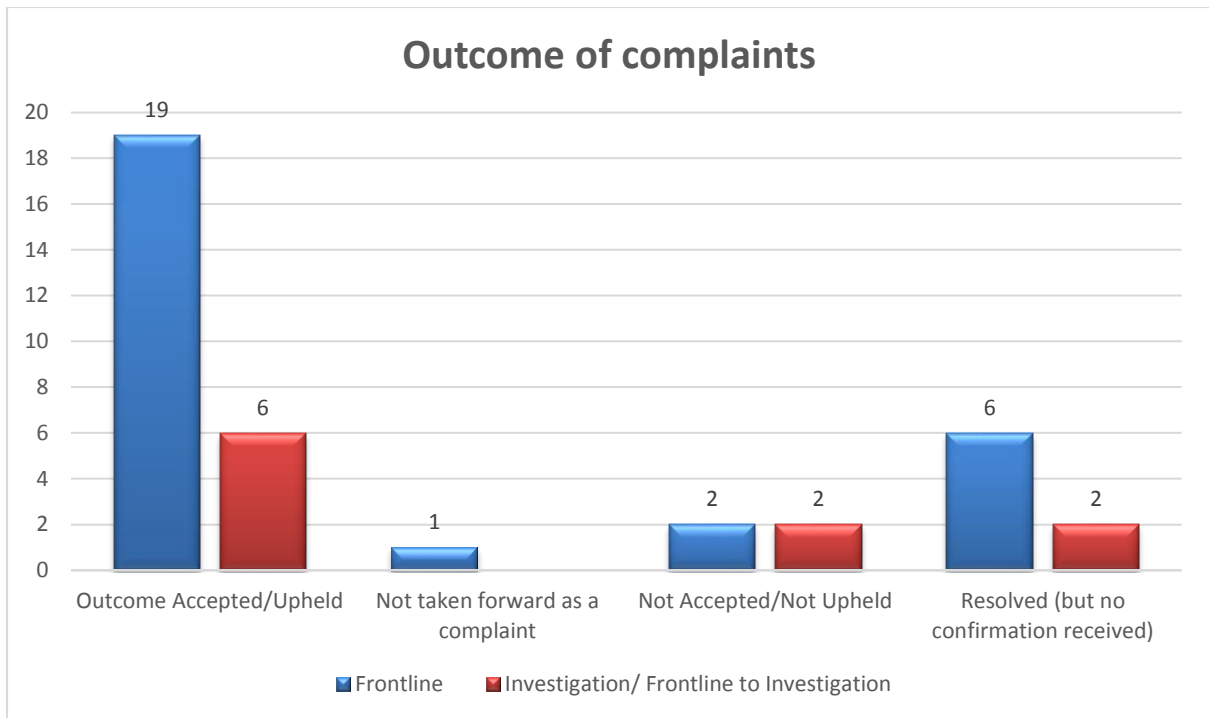


Chart 6 - Outcome of complaints

The following table shows the above data as percentages of the total complaints closed at each stage.

Stage	Outcome Accepted/ Upheld	Not taken forward as a complaint	Not Accepted/ Not Upheld	Resolved (no confirmation)
Frontline	67.9%	3.6%	7.1%	21.4%
Investigation	60%		20%	20%

Currently, the University has no ongoing complaints being dealt with by the SPSO.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED

In terms of the University's Vision we are committed to shaping our actions and decisions around a set of core values. These values are critical to our complaints handling process. They are to value people, to work together, to have integrity in what we do, to endeavour to make a difference and to have excellence at the heart of our interactions with others.

You Said	We Did
Problems accessing internet in certain buildings	UoDIT looking into upgrading wireless connections in these buildings
Concerns with changes to University Policy regarding student abroad	University to evaluate the Policy once the first cohort have completed
Issues with catching up after missing blocks of teaching	Recommendations made to introduce administrative procedures to set up a meeting with an appropriate person to discuss any missed teaching
Problems with people smoking outside buildings	Reviewing this issue with the possibility of establishing smoking areas at an appropriate distance from entrance and exit points of buildings
Students struggling to understand lectures	Set up a peer review of teaching and will look into ending classes 5-10 minutes early to allow for questions
Concerns about process used to award scholarships	Schools to consider using a marking scheme when deciding on scholarships
Unhappy with attitude of supervisor	Improve signposting for students requiring support and managing expectations of students and supervisors

## 7. TRENDS

The chart below shows the number of complaints dealt with at stage 1, stage 2 and overall since the CHP was introduced in 2013. As can be seen, numbers are falling each year which is a positive sign. CHP training continues each year with representatives from each School and Directorate. Training is also available to teams within Schools and Directorates.

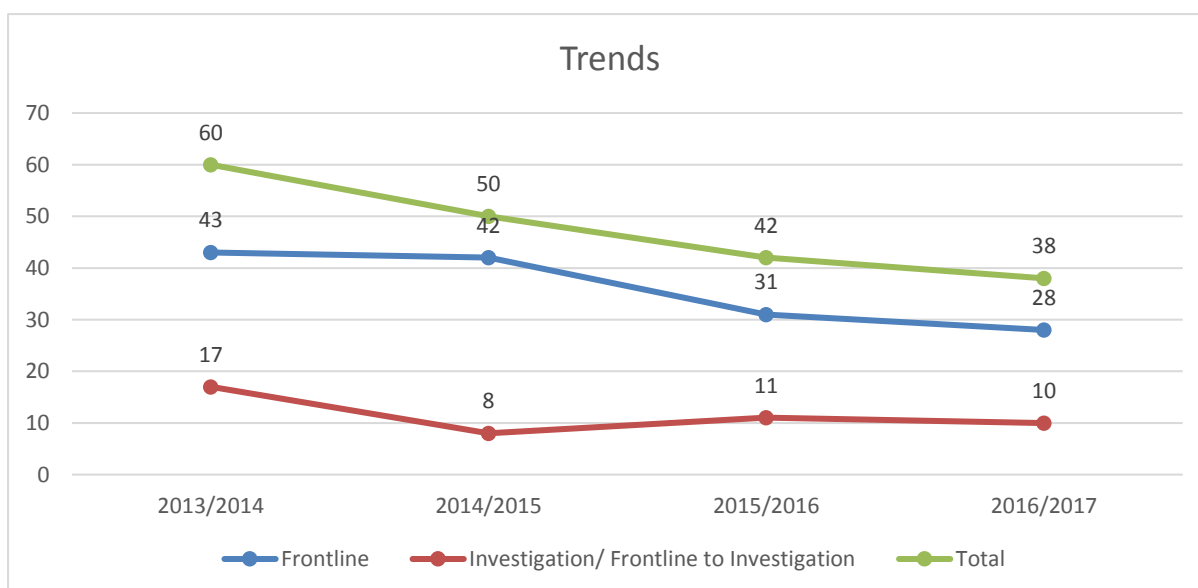


Chart 7 - Trends in number of complaints